

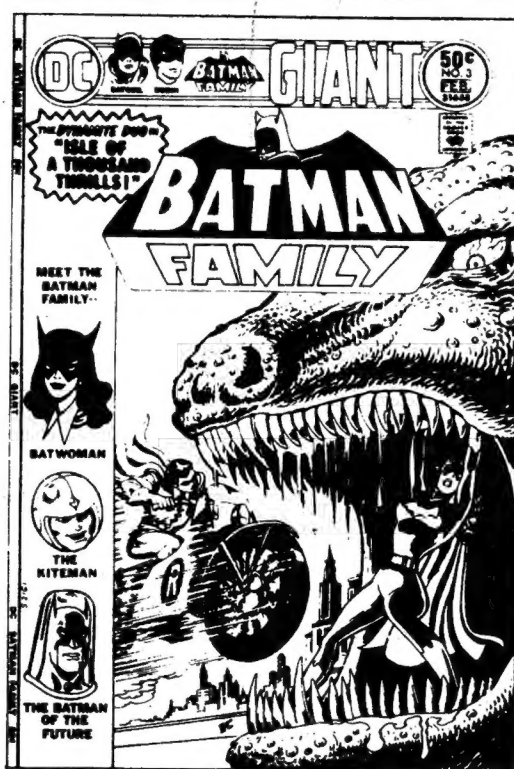
THE COMIC REVIEW



BEMUSING MAGAZINE

7
10P

NEW GODS & DARKSEID REVIVED - E-MAN LIVES - QUALITY SUPER-HEROES RETURN
S.H.I.E.L.D. BY STARLIN & CHAYKIN -- PAPERBACK COMICS SERIES LAUNCHED



BEMUSING MAGAZINE

volume 1 number 7 - OCTOBER 1975

editor & publisher: Martin Lock

assistant editor: Nigel Edwards

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ART CREDITS

Greg Chown: 3, 12

Andrew Hanson: 13

Leslie Stannage: 2

Superswipe: 1,4,11

Mercy Van Vlack: 7

BEMUSINGS

And so another issue of Bem emerges, with news, views, and reviews, plus this time, a bonus of extra added Weird Trash, brought to us by Jack Straw and overseen by Nigel Edwards--all complaints, law-suits, bombs, and gripes should be sent to them, please, not to me!

You will have noticed that this issue of Bem isn't a "Comic Mart Special" -- this is an experiment, if the sales are hit we'll have to go back to that rather complicated logo. Also, there is perhaps a slight shift of emphasis away from straightforward news and reviews -- but more on that next time. Bem-8, back to 20 pages I hope unless print costs go up, since the free spoof of Bem by Weird Trash is a once-only event, ought to feature the return of articles -- Mr Hunter Tremayne has filed pieces on E-Man and the Barry Smith Conan, while Ruan Lanihorne is promising to write an extended review-cum-article on the graphic novel "Misty" --any title suggestions?

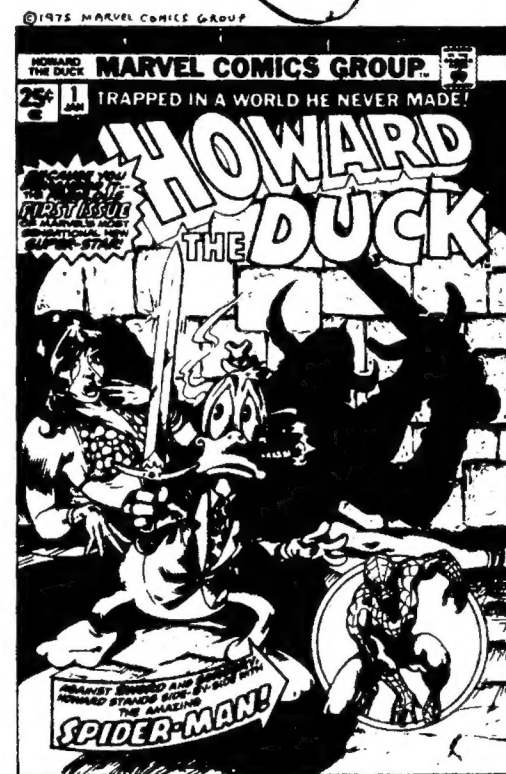
There's a slight change in the art in Bem this time, too, as we welcome three people new to Bem; Leslie Stannage, whose GL head is on this very page; Andrew Hanson, who sent in the Man-Thing drawing; and Mercy Van Vlack, whose Supergirl illustration I got from Alan Austin by promising him a review copy of The Heroine Addict. Mercy is an American fan-artist, providing fine work for Batmania, THA, and Comics Unlimited--I will certainly try to make her a Bemusing regular too, if I can!

As you'll see from the ad I composed to go around Mercy's illustration, I'm now the British Agent for "The Comic Heroines Fan Club", publishers of THA and The Adventuress -- and an upcoming THA features an article of mine, on Modesty Blaise. They're rather interesting magazines, I find -- if you are fond of the female of the super-hero species you'd do well to join the club!

Thanks as usual go to all contributors to Bem, plus stockists, friends, and of course advertisers--if you too can thank Alan and Nick for supporting us by buying from their ads, and saying it was Bem that sent you, that would be a great help.

And finally, a note to subscribers--if I don't put your post code on the envelope, can you write and let me know what it is? It should speed them up a day or so... -ML

NEWS



MARVEL SPOTLIGHT has got big plans for a number of our favourite characters. Thor's friends Hogun, Fandral and Volstagg will be billed as WARRIORS THREE, by Wein, Buscema, and Gan; Steve Gerber will bring us books showcasing NIGHTHAWK and VALKYRIE; Hulk's old sparring partner DOC SAMSON will fight the Rhino, courtesy of Wein and Tuska; and Jim Starlin and Howie Chaykin are working on a S.H.I.E.L.D. issue.

Meanwhile, MARVEL PREMIERE #28 will bring "The Legion of Monsters", with Man-Thing, Ghost Rider (on leave from the Champions?), Morbius, and Werewolf by Night. It sounds pretty terrible, but was a logical result of the boom of super-hero groups. And then #29 introduces THE LIBERTY LEGION, a merry band of World War II Timely heroes--after that, a strip originally intended for the b&w MARVEL PREVIEW mag, TITAN, will take up residence for about three issues.

In the over-size, MARVEL TREASURY EDITION remains quarterly, as does OZ SERIES--they are the only surviving series, although an occasional surprise may come along--"2001" is scheduled for release next July.

Plans for the Superman/Spider-Man team-up continue; Dick Giordano will ink this epic Conway/Andru effort, and two versions will be produced. You guessed it, one version

will have a Marvel cover, while the second version will have a DC cover. Sheesh!

After his epic encounter with Spider-Man and sundry barbarians, not to mention Pro-Rata, Lord of the Cosmic Calculator, in his far-out first issue, HOWARD THE DUCK faces "The Menace of the Deadly Space Turnip" by Gerber & Brunner. Steve also plans to star Howard in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE some time...

KULL THE DESTROYER returns, now that his black & white mag has been cancelled; #16 will appear next summer, from Roy Thomas.

Steve Gan takes over inking CONAN, from #58 (Jan); he has also inked an issue of THOR. Sal Buscema will be regular artist on MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE (Roy Thomas is taking over the editorial chores--we were getting used to musical chairs on writers, artists and inkers, but musical editors? Chee!). Sal is also doing a fill-in SPIDER-MAN, while Jim Starlin's doing a HULK, Val Mayerik is taking over the KA-ZAR artwork (if they can stop him from drawing the Jungle Lord in miles of bandages), and Berni Wrightson is drawing a HULK cover, with jade-jaws in a battle with Man-Thing.

RETURN OF THE GODS is an upcoming Marvel title; according to Rob Barrow, this may be a Kirby title with certain similarities to the New Gods series...

CHARLTON: CUTI RESIGNS, ROG-2000 DROPPED

Nick Cuti has resigned as George Wildman's assistant editor, and will work freelance for Charlton; his old job goes to Paul Delpo.

Charlton are now producing three fifty-page black & white magazines based on TV series--SPACE: 1999, SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, and also EMERGENCY. The Neal Adams-Dick Giordano group "Continuity Associates" are producing them; a Six Million Dollar Man story has been done by Howie Chaykin, and many other Crusty Bunkers will participate, behind Neal Adams covers. Nick Cuti will be doing all the scripting on these, and corresponding 25-cent titles, which will be drawn by John Byrne (Emergency), and Joe Staton, who's working for everyone now.



Rog-2000 has been taken out of DOOMSDAY + 1; however, issue 4 of CHARLTON BULLSEYE will be featuring both Rog and E-MAN in separate tales (issue 3 has a 24-page Sanho Kim story)--\$1.25 from CPL/Gang Publications, 4010 Mallway Drive (A), Indianapolis, IN 46236, USA.

WARREN: VAMPIRELLA/SPIRIT TEAM-UP

COMIX INTERNATIONAL #2 is due soon, with (in full colour) reprints of Wrightson, Maroto (3) and Corben (6) stories. Expensive? You bet!

VAMPIRELLA #49 will feature a Vampi-Spirit team-up in Wildwood Cemetery, written by DuBay and drawn by Eisner and Mayo. Issue 50 will be all Vampirella.

PYRAMID: "A NEW AMERICAN PULP"

Due in October in the paperback format from Pyramid (at \$1.50) is WEIRD HEROES vol.1, with comics by Sutton, Steranko, Sheridan, Nino, & Jones--scripters include Philip José Farmer, Archie Goodwin, Ron Goulart, and the editor & producer, Byron Preiss. A Steranko cover, good quality paper... What more should we ask?

REG USPATOFF'S AMERICA

Comic strips of the "Peanuts" and "Pogo" sort are fairly well accepted in America now; will comic-book adventures gain the same level of respectability? That's a heavy question, but a couple of new projects show there's hope yet.

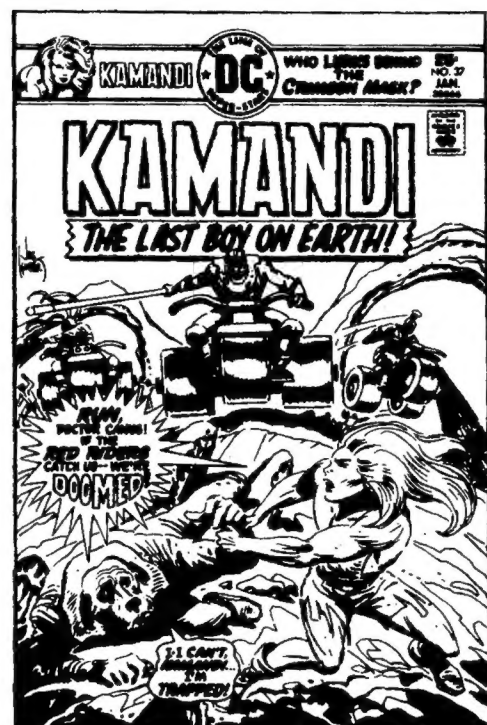
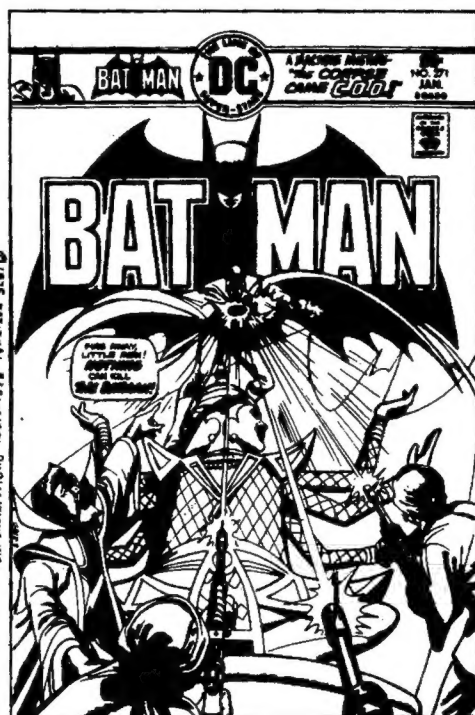
First, Byron Preiss Visual Publications are releasing the first volume of "Weird Heroes", "a new American pulp", as they subtitle it. A number of top-rank comics and fantasy creators are involved, a second volume is scheduled for December, and 4 more volumes are in production -- publishers Pyramid have got quite a heavy investment here in adventure comics, they must be hoping for general sale to average readers, not just comic fans.

Due at about the same time are a couple of prestige hardcover books, masterminded by Gil Kane, and published by Morning Star Press at \$12.95 each for 100 8½"x11" pages. They adapt Robert E. Howard stories; Gil himself is the artist for "The Flame Horse", while Rich Corben draws "King of the Abyss"--the price tags alone make the project highly respectable.

Fantasy themes are popular in films, too; I hear that Milton Subotsky is planning 3 films featuring THONGOR, to be shot back-to-back for a mere \$7,000,000, plus SPIDER-MAN (scripted, by Brian Clemens) and HULK (by Subotsky), not to mention ERB's "At the Earth's Core". This seems to be based on the success of "Land That Time Forgot"; add "Superman '76", with Burt Reynolds as the Man of Steel and Mary Tyler Moore possible as Lois--or is it the other way round? Anyway, it's one film I'll queue to see.

So, can comic-books finally get the respect in America they have in Europe? My own view is that the black & white books, with their slick magazine format and daunting price tags, are a step forward--"Marvel Movie Premiere", "Savage Sword of Conan", even "Deadly Hands". But it's a shame that the mystery books seem to have hit a downswing, while super-teams, those kid gangs in long-johns, invade the schedules (and avenge them, and defend, and champion, and challenge, and guard--the legions are legion!). They're too long on fight, too short on plot, except for the occasional noble exception--they are not "respectable", people.

To get respect, the comic book publishers, and creators, and fans, must earn it! -RU



THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, featuring the forties Quality heroes Uncle Sam, The Ray, Doll Man, Black Condor, Human Bomb and Phantom Lady, is definite as a Conway-edited title; issue 1 is to be cover-dated April, written by Conway, pencilled by Estrada, and inked by Royer. Also due that month from Gerry is SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS, drawn by the ever-prolific Ric Estrada, and inked by Pablo Marcos. In this, Darkseid plots to use Earth villains as pawns to attack our world -- but they find out, and band together to fight back. The first issue will star, along with Darkseid, Super Gorilla Grodd, Captain Cold, Clayface, Star Sapphire (not Carol Ferris), and a Manhunter clone.

KARATE KID, PLASTIC MAN, and KOBRA debut in November (cover-dated March); the Joe Orlando-edited Karate Kid is by Levitz, Estrada, and Joe Staton, and although its adventures are set in the present the Kid will continue to be an active member of the LSH.

METAL MEN, drawn by Walt Simonson, will go straight into their own book, starting with #45; after the Gerber-scripted first number, Pasko takes over. Another returning title is SUPER DC GIANT, which will be a companion to 1ST ISSUE SPECIAL, in the 50c size and mainly reprint. The first new issue, "#27", will be spotlighting the Teen Titans. Also in the 50c size will be FOUR STAR SPECTACULAR, featuring four super-hero reprints a time; #1 gives us Superboy, Wonder Woman, a re-drawn Golden Age Flash story, and another undecided tale.

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #10 is OUTSIDERS by Joe Simon & Jerry Grandenetti, #11 is CODE NAME: ASSASSIN by Conway, Skeates, and the Redondo studio, inked by Milgrom, #12 is STARMAN by Conway, Mike Vosburg, and Mike Royer--not Ted Knight, but a member of a race of invading aliens who comes over to our side.

THE NEW GODS are back! Gerry Conway is the writer/editor and Mike Vosburg is the artist for 1ST ISSUE SPECIAL 13, in which Orion goes on a guerilla mission to assassinate Darkseid.

SANDMAN ends with #6; BEOWULF (with #6) and STALKER (with #4) are suspended pending sales returns (hah!), HOUSE OF SECRETS joins the other remaining mystery books on a bi-monthly schedule, and SHAZAM and YOUNG LOVE go from bi-monthly down to quarterly. And, to finish the bad news, Chic Stone has been made regular artist on KAMANDI A.K. (After Kirby, natch!).

Green Lantern, Green Arrow and Black Canary stories originally done for 1st Issue Special will turn up in another title; an upcoming DC SPECIAL features WAR AGAINST THE MONSTERS; Ric Estrada & Wally Wood have done the art for a Hawkman-Flash teaming in SUPER-TEAM FAMILY; a BRAVE & BOLD Aquaman-Batman team-up is to be pencilled by John Calnan, and inked by Aparo. And also on the team-up front, Mike Uslan and Bob Rozakis are scripting a 3-part story for DETECTIVE in which a villain tries to kill The Batman--all three of him--and Bates & Maggin have SUPERGIRL and ROBIN/BATGIRL stories under way, as well as "Superman 2001" for SUPERMAN #300, with layouts by Infantino and Curt Swan art. The story takes as its premise the rocket with baby Kal-El in it landing in 1976, rather than 1938...

In the dollar over-size, November brings us RUDOLPH and CHRISTMAS WITH THE SUPER-HEROES, while January launches SUPERMAN/SPIDER-MAN and BI-CENTENNIAL SALUTE (Uncle Sam?).

And, if you're in New York on 27th to 29th February, be certain to miss what DC is doing to celebrate Superman's birthday--THE SUPER DC CONVENTION. You can watch a comic being put together, you can meet your favourite super-heroes, fall over... Good grief!

FAN-THINGS

A COLUMN OF FAN NEWS AND FANZINE REVIEWS, CONDUCTED FOR BEMUSING BY ED SALLIS

Well, here we are again, with two pages to play with at last, while Our Friendly Editor's still stuck with only one page for his "Tale-Enders"--virtue is triumphant at last! What a shame it's rather a slack time of the year for fan publishing, so there isn't really all that much new to tell you about...

To start off with, the bad news; "Blitzine", which I plugged in my last two columns (in the August N-ZINE, and also OBLIVION #1), will not now be appearing, Philip Elliot informs us. I hope he doesn't forsake fanzine publishing, we need all the zines we can get--let's hope that he'll surprise us all, one of these days. More puzzling is the non-appearance of Paul Rose's CAULDRON OF FEAR, due out for the August Con; Paul hasn't even sent a reciprocal ad in for Bem as arranged. This isn't his first fanzine publishing venture (remember ALIAS?), so Paul should know how long these things take--I hope nothing's wrong down in Hampshire.

I've been asked to give N-ZINE/NAMELESS ZINE a detailed review, as a matter of record; it's sold out, so don't ask for the August issue--you could get a subscription in (45p for three issues) to Nigel Edwards at The Bungalow (or "Bugalow", would you believe?), Clark's Holiday Camp, North Cliff Rd, Hornsea, N. Humberside, HU18 1JN. Anyway, open it from one side and you've got the 16-page N-ZINE #2, open it from the other side and you've got 36 pages of #3 of NAMELESS ZINE. Darn cunning, the Ace Double format, isn't it? The price tag is a mere 10p; for this, you get properly printed covers; N-Zine has The Shadow by Superswipe, while the other half has Nightmaster by Chown, plus an EC-type spaceship by Supes. Inside N-Zine was the latest news, by Pete April, plus Emlock Tale-Enders with a fine full-page introduction by Ken Cropper and (good grief!) a fellow by the name of Captain Swipewell, Fan-Things by me (being ruthlessly attacked by a Greg Chown drawing of Conan), and reviews by the same lot as Bem, plus an interesting discussion by the North Humberside mob. Flipping the zine over, and moving past cover repros of "Jughead" and "Richie Rich" -- was Martin trying to tell us something? -- we find a Nightmaster article by Jim Korock, a report on a Liverpool Con by the editor, "My Trip to Mars" by Martin Lock, an article on Una (Mar-Vell's old girl-friend) by T. Porter Benson, a strip by Ed Woods and Jack

Straw, a Ruan Lanihorne article on the current EC reprints called "EC Come--EC Go"--Ruan says one word got left out of the penultimate line, so please change "they are the same" to "they are not the same" -- subtle, yes? Add 17 pages of letters, a Dave Weedon "Kalamiti" strip, book reviews, and the basically friendly and light-hearted atmosphere fostered by Nige, and you've got quite a bargain!

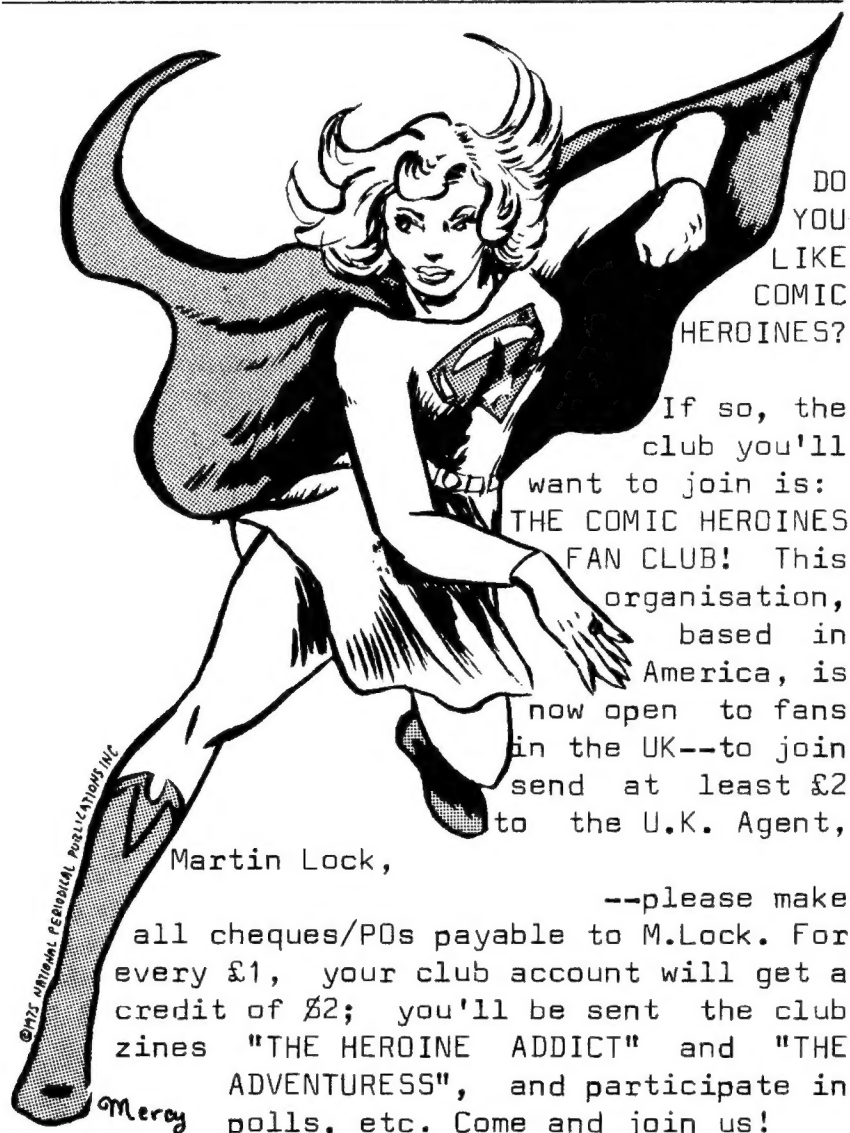
FANZINE FANATIQUE #12 arrived recently, from Keith Walker; it's basically a review of all the fanzines (mainly SF, but including most of the comic zines nowadays) that Keith receives --and it also contains much useful information on fanzine printing. If you edit a fanzine, I'd recommend trading copies; if not, send 10p an issue. It all helps fanzine togetherness--you'd never believe how many fanzines there are being published in this country!

The long-running American newszine known as "TCR" or THE COMIC READER is an interesting contrast; profit-making (it subsidises the worthy Menomonee Falls Guardian & Gazette) and professional, in 32 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ "x5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " pages #123 gives us the latest DC, Marvel, Charlton, Gold Key, Warren, Archie, National Lampoon, and Harvey news, a checklist of the October-published issues of the first five of 'em, and details in half-a-dozen lines of almost every comic. If you already get Bem and CM News you won't be missing much, though; for years TCR has been the main "primary source" for all the British newszines, from Oracle and Fantasy Domain onwards.

I don't have to mention COMICS UNLIMITED or THE 1975 FANTASY UNLIMITED ANNUAL, as Alan's ad on page 10 tells us more than I knew--the writer, I can tell from the style, must have been good ol' trained tapir 176-671. I have read the Doc Savage article referred to; five interesting ML-typed pages, with eight illos by Rafa. All I don't know is who wrote it! The last issue under the FANTASY UNLIMITED name, #30, was the first in the slick litho format; aside from a few hurried layouts, a necessity with the strict monthly schedule, it's a nice production, with Fan Spotlight on Emlock by Night (come to think of it, I don't think I've ever seen Em on a night of the full moon...), the first part of the LSH article, and the regulars. Oh, my 'zine review in CU 31 is incomplete--it just reached the page end!

Luckily, it stands up okay as it is.

Despite hopes that the London Comic Marts would become a monthly event, it looks as if this won't happen quite yet. As you'll have noticed, there's no October Mart; November 8th is definite, at the old Kentish Town venue of Lyndhurst Hall, but the projected December Mart at Central Hall Westminster is unlikely to be arranged. Rob Barrow, tireless organiser of so many fan events, was dissatisfied with Central Hall, and is looking for a larger and more convenient location; if he can't find one in



time, the next Mart after November, again at Lyndhurst Hall, will be on January 3rd. But, for an October event, don't forget that STAN LEE will be at the Roundhouse, in Chalk Farm Road NW1, on the evening of October 20th--you can get the 60p tickets from either Roundhouse or British Marvel, and various Marvel goodies will be on sale there on the night.

Hunt Emerson, creator of "Dogman" and sundry other British undergrounds, writes to say he's involved in a project called STREETCOMIX-- he will welcome any original artwork, except the "fan-art" copies of Kirby and Adams (sorry, Supes), so if you're interested in cartooning, send work to him at Birmingham Arts Lab, Tower Street, Birmingham B19 3UY, okay?

This column tries to keep tabs on all the comics shops, so if you're within a hundred or so miles of Hull, I'd recommend a trip to 21, Princes Avenue, where BOGUS hang out-- plenty of special imports, all at bargain prices. In London, welcome SF & COMIC BOOK CO, in Notting Hill Gate (26, Hillgate Street, W8), just off the main road and conveniently close to the Underground station--come out on the east side of the Gate and turn down by the Gaumont. The shop brings imports in direct from America, and specialises in fanzines you'll find nowhere else in the UK--add it to your list of places to visit, along with those I listed in Bem-5.

Two pages for Fan-Things, did I say? well, make that three, as I've still got a lot of ground to cover. Today's post brought COMICS LAND #1, an impressive Italian fanzine written in English throughout (occasionally translated rather literally, but one gets used to it)--it costs £1.00 from Nino Bernazzali,

Italy, and is well worth it; 52 pages, the middle 4 ("Lance" by Warren Tufts) and cover in colour, and all on top-quality stock. France's Robert Gigi is interviewed, and a 10-page story by him and Claude Moliterni (oop! See you on page 15!..

THE BEMUSING MAGAZINE FANZINE DIRECTORY, PART IV...

OBLIVION current issue #1 1 issue for 20p	BATMANIA current issue #21 50p by post from British Agent (edited by Rich Morrissey)	COMIC MEDIA current ish #11 twice yearly, 30p by post; 4 issues for £1.20	THE COMIC READER current ish #123 monthly, 6 issues for \$6.00, 12 for \$12.00	FANZINE FANATIQUE current issue #12 regularly, 10p an issue by post, or for trade/LoC
from: Chris R. Wiggin	from: Alan Austin	from: CM Publications	from: Street Enterprises	from: Keith A. Walker

If sending an enquiry to any fanzine, please enclose an s.a.e.-- allow at least a fortnight for replies. Previous instalments, to make a total of 17 zines, were in Bems 4-6. -ML

REACTION

Send your letters to: Martin Lock.

Dear Martin,

Goshwowboyohboy, Bem-6 sure was great! Better even than Weird Trash!

By the way, what's a Weird Trash?

Richard Morrissey.

Er...thanks, Rich--I think. And now do you know what a Weird Trash is?

Dear Martin,

Bem-7 was very enjoyable and interesting, but you complained...

Oops! That's from next issue's lettercol. But do not worry, I'll find a sensible letter yet...

Dear Martin,

I was happy to see that Bem-6 kept up the same high standard we expect to see from you. However, I think there are criticisms I should make--I'll start off with the cover repros. These are good to have if the comics are ones not distributed, but when the covers are (from Bem-6) Destructor, Batman Family, Captain Marvel, Plop, Thor, FF, etc these can evaporate into a waste of space. Try and feature more non-distributed issues such as Spider-Man.

About artwork; Superswipe still presents some good, attractive work, but exactly the opposite can be said about Greg Chown, whose illustrations on pages 10 & 11 were awful. Also, don't include small strips like the "Captain Nuts" by Schwipe, which had the same principle as "Charlie Marvel" in the Daily Star #1, which obviously had had no thought put into it.

Now for the praise; sorry, not for you, but for Paul Gravett, for his excellent review of E-MAN #7. I'd only ever bought one issue, and never really bothered to get another--this has changed now very quickly, after I read this review I went down to my local newsagent and got a couple.

Spider-Man #148 is one comic I'm not going to miss--a great review by Nige.

Martin Cohen.

11 out of 17 cover repros were of non-distributed issues, actually, Martin--but I get your point. It isn't always possible to use all the repros I would like to; there was only one Marvel I could use that I didn't, GIANT-SIZE DAREDEVIL. You, it seems, don't like Greg Chown's artwork; I do. I agree the head on page 10 wasn't too outstanding--but GL on page 11 is a nice portrait, and his pencils for the page 4 feature were fine. I do agree about the E-Man review by Paul Gravett; it is a pity it was too long (even after some cuts) to qualify for the prize. Thanks for writing, Martin--letters like yours are always useful.

Dear Martin,

Why do fanzines never print the addresses of the letter writers? Surely they should encourage as much corresponding as possible, as you said yourself getting mail is half the fun, I love it.

Anyway, Bem was factually interesting, only slightly behind CMN with some of the news this time. You had just about the right number of cover reproductions--but in my opinion, a few too many comic reviews, interest starts flagging if read all in one go. Fan-Things definitely should get more space, it is useful to know when a new issue of a fanzine is up-coming, and other such trivia. Otherwise, everything else seems to be well balanced at the moment.

Alan R. Cookson, 13 Waverley Drive,
Tarleton, Preston, Lancs.

I could always forward a letter, if a stamp for the purpose was enclosed. I do agree that Bem-6 had too many reviews, with all the contestants in the review contest--is the balance better this time? You're not the only one to say Fan-Things deserves an extra page--Laurence Milsted suggests Reaction could be cut to make room, and that is what we've done--though this extra type-reduction helps to keep the word-count up, if you can read it (I hope, I hope...).

Dear Martin,

Censorship in comics? It seems that just about everyone has a view of some kind about it! I think that the sudden resurgence in interest was started following that absurd issue of the Hulk, in which Betty Ross, falling in the nude, gained a sack-cloth miraculously! Ridiculous, of course; unnecessary? Well... there are three points to consider. One--the majority of the readers are kids; two--if you let it go, you will open the flood-gates for sure, you're a major company, do not forget; three--some old harridan might see it and raise all kinds of hell about it!

And so it must be said, do we really want an end to censorship? The prospect of tastefully handled love scenes is indeed pleasant, but the mind boggles at the thought of some of Henry Sandwich's fave raves in the hands of 8-year-olds!

What I think is needed is merely a revision of the Code's more archaic laws, but not abolition of censorship. The case for a compromise rests.

What say, Martin?

Hunter Tremayne.

Who, me? I only work here, buster. Let's see if Kev O'Donnell, or anybody else, wishes to give us a rebutal next time. And that editorial cop-out ends this issue's lettercol; if you'd like to be included next time, remember to write, right?

ENMLOCK TALE-ENDERS

Let's start with the Marvels for December that will be coming over, all 21 of them. CAP AMERICA #192 is the last pre-Kirby issue, with the old plot tied up neatly to give Jack a free hand for 1976; CONAN (#57) returns to the UK with a fill-in issue by Mike Ploog, "Incident in Argos" -- it looks good, and the Kane kover's fine too. #128 of DAREDEVIL begins with Matt throwing down the DD costume for -- 7½ pages? -- and Klaus Janson's inks making Bob Brown's pencils presentable, and DEFENDERS 3D has Jack Abel helping Sam Grainger's wooden pencils (well, what other sort were you expecting?) not at all--but fill-in writer Mantlo manages a complete story, that's something. And in his own book, DOCTOR STRANGE (#11), thanks to Englehart/Colan/Palmer, meets spectres from his past life; next, the end of the world...

FF #165, with guest-artist Perez, is the second half of the Crusader's debut, which was originally going to be Giant-Size FF #6 before the G-S books went reprint; efficiently drawn (though Sinnott inks must help), proving that George Perez is a worthy addition to the Marvel team. FEAR #31 is able to cover-blurb itself "thrill-fraught final issue!" -- and Michael Morbius flies off into the moonset, but he's bound to turn up somewhere in a few months. GHOST RIDER #15 is pencilled by Bob Brown and inked by Don Heck--'nuff said? INHUMANS #2 is Moench/Perez/Kida/impressive; combining the Master of Many Words (Moench) with the strong and silent type of hero (Black Bolt) was a mad idea, but it works. IRON MAN #81, Mike Friedrich's last issue (Marv Wolfman, not to mention Herb Trimpe, takes over next time), has Chic Stone practising for his Kamandi assignment by limiting himself to 80 panels; KA-ZAR #13 is by Moench, Hama & Kida --his last jungle battle for a while, as he sets out at the end for London Town. MARVEL CHILLERS #2 is Modred the Mystic again by Mantlo/Trinidad --like #1, it promises TIGRA next issue, perhaps it always will. MARVEL PREMIERE #27 has a 4-page SATANA reprint from Vampire Tales #2 by Thomas & Romita (uncredited), and the new "Deathsong" by Claremont & The Tribe, also starring the devil's daughter; MARVEL PRESENTS #2 is Bloodstone's 2nd try-out issue, interesting work by Warner and Trinidad--not Boyette this time, thankfully.

In 19 pages, MARVEL TEAM-UP #40 manages to fit in Human Torch, Crime-Master, Big Man, Enforcers, Sandman, guests Sons of the Tiger...oh yeah, and a guy called Spider-Man. LUKE CAGE (#28) is the

only title Tuska & Colletta look right on; Doug Moench ends the tale with Mr Cage making a wish (heh, heh). SON OF SATAN #1 has a moody Starlin splash page, and Jim Mooney's 17 pages are not a let-down; John Warner's the new writer. SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP #3 is written by Jim Shooter, of all people, and drawn by George Evans; Doc Doom's precarious alliance with Sub-Mariner continues.

THOR #242 is Len Wein's debut issue; Big John and Joltin' Joe keep the art up to standard too. WARLOCK #10, with a two-page interlude in the middle by Mar-Vell himself, is the usual cosmic composition, with Thanos versus the Magus, who's Adam's older self, as Warlock looks on; and our alphabetical amble ends with "Night of the Demon" by Claremont, Cockrum and Grainger -- X-MEN #95, the book most worthy to go monthly.

Leaving the unimported Marvels (IRON FIST #2, MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #25 on Sinbad, giant-sizers and the usual Hulk, Spider-Man, etc) for my CM News column, it's time to swing to DC. JOKER #4 (Dec) is worth a mention for guest-stars Green Arrow & Dinah Lance, who never gets a chance to change to her Black Canary costume (shame!); Elliot Maggin and J.L. Garcia Lopez make it all entertaining. MAN-BAT #1 (of only 2, it seems) is by Conway, Ditko and Milgrom, worth the admission price for The Batman as rendered by Ditko; interesting. And WONDER WOMAN #220 (Nov) is the first time for too long that the Atom has had a whole book to move around in. Passable Pasko story, gorgeous Giordano art. STALKER #4 is (probably) our last sight of the man with the stolen soul, and a fit finale by Levitz, Ditko and Wood; some nice effects by all of them. HOUSE OF MYSTERY #238 (Jan -- happy new year!) has Oleck/Jodloman and Michelinie/Cruz tales--the latter, "Headlines of Doom", ought to have you rolling on the floor in hysterics--but what horror story tries for that sort of effect?

BRAVE & BOLD #123 (Dec) features The Batman of course, plus Plastic Man and Metamorpho -- extra value from Bob Haney and Jim Aparo, who turn in their almost obligatory solid job of work, with a new version of the old Batman-arresting-Bruce Wayne plot. SUPER-TEAM FAMILY 2 contains the best Batman team-up ever--the classic Adams tale from B&B #79, the classic teaming with Deadman--and a new story by O'Neil, Estrada, & Draut, as Wildcat and Creeper star in "Showdown in San Lorenzo"--it's quite good, but "The Track of the Hook" has to be unfair competition. And farewell! -ML

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This is Cain, your able caretaker, here to say a few words about Britain's largest, most popular and most successful fan publishing enterprise-- FANTASY UNLIMITED PUBLICATIONS, so gather round, as I give you the low-down on Alan Austin's new projects...

First, of course, there's COMICS UNLIMITED; it was known until recently as Fantasy Unlimited, changing its name with the current issue, number 31 (October). Besides the regular features and departments such as "We Want Information" (your comics queries answered by editor Alan Austin), "Worlds of Emlock" (a review column on all the most interesting coming comics by Martin Lock), "Fox on the Run" (the latest comics news, brought to CU by Gary Fox), "The Critic" (all the best new fanzines reviewed by Alan McKenzie, Ed Sallis and Alan Austin, plus guest contributors), "Mail Unlimited" (the letter column), "George, the Toad and the Rock" (a humour strip by Paul Jay), and the bumper list of Fantasy Unlimited comics for sale, CU #31 features an excellent 5-page comic strip by Stephen Baskerville, the conclusion of an in-depth look at the Legion of Super-Heroes, and "Captain Smell" by Paul Jay; scheduled for near-future issues are a different type of sword & sorcery strip by Barry Clements & Greg Chown, a detailed article on Doc Savage illustrated by Rafa, a way-out Christmas pantomime story by the creator of Solarman, plus articles on Luke Cage, The Atom, and as many of your favourite Marvel & DC heroes as we can manage! Our policy is for the best articles, features and artwork, sent to you every month, twelve times a year, all for 25p per issue from your favourite comics shop, or by post from us--a four-issue subscription is still only £1.00, 8 issues for £1.85, or 12 for £2.50. CU is the only regular monthly British fanzine.

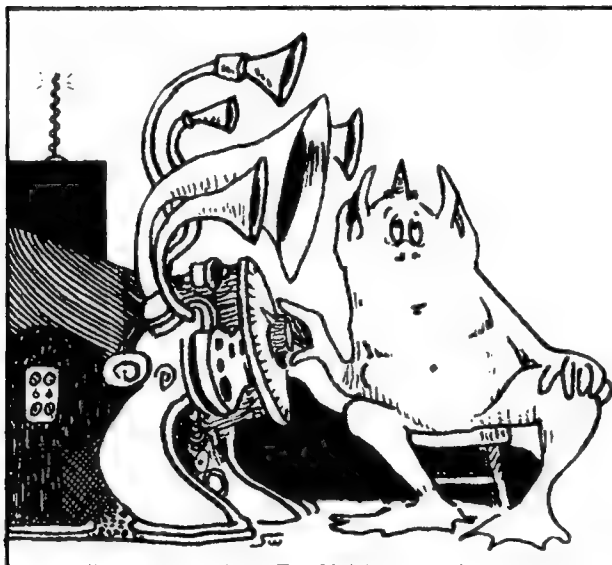
Other FU publications still available are THE COMIC-BOOK PRICE GUIDE FOR GREAT BRITAIN, 60 pages of indispensable information on how much the comics we collect are worth (38p, postage included), certain back issues of FU at 20p each, and the bumper 100-page FANTASY UNLIMITED ANNUAL 1975 (50p by post), featuring articles on Star Trek, U.S. fanzines, Spider-Man, Jack Kirby, and British comics, plus fiction (including the never-before-published origin of Great Britain's own SOLARMAN) and strips. 34 pages are reprinted from rare early issues of Fantasy Unlimited; the rest is all-new, with art by Russ Nicholson, Bonk, Antonio Ghura, Superswipe, Steve Craddock, and the best front cover you'll ever see, by John Bolton.

And the future? Following the success of the (temporarily out of print) Marvel Super-Hero Index, volume one of the DC HERO INDEX is due shortly, as is the second issue of THE GOLDEN AGE FANZINE, with engrossing articles on comics history by Mike Hill, a column by Martin Lock, and much more; we're already British Agents for BATMANIA, the fanzine for Batman fans, and soon we hope to be offering the highly-acclaimed THE LEGION OUTPOST to British fans for the first time, plus an artistic surprise or two we can only hint at at the moment--but, if you keep watching COMICS UNLIMITED, you'll be the first to know the details!

FROM: FANTASY UNLIMITED.

England





REVIEW SECTION

"THE RISE AND FALL OF ATLAS COMICS" opinion by Hunter Tremayne

Atlas never really had a chance.

The comic-book medium as we know it has been going strong for getting on for half a century now, and in that time every idea or concept has been utilised, successfully or not; it has reached the stage now where a barbarian anti-hero from the pulps of the thirties is among the top five sellers! Of the super-heroes, only the best survive.

So, imagine yourself the publisher of a new outfit. The field in which you want to operate is perpetually vied for by two enormously successful publishing houses, both of which employ writers and artists of the highest quality. Now you, of course, want to tempt some of them over to your camp. To do this, you make extravagant promises of copyright control for artists, and say you will accept work from freelance writers, et cetera.

Now, you can't create "earth-shaking new concepts"--there aren't any--so you decide to do pastiches of already tried and trusted characters and formulae. For "Hulk" substitute "Brute", for "Conan" substitute "Ironjaw", and so it continues, ad infinitum.

Then, for reasons best known to yourself, you decide to tighten up on the "freedom" you advertised, so most of your best men leave to re-join the dynamic duo, and you are left with Marcos (on the abysmal Ironjaw), Thorne, Wood, Ditko (weirdos of the world unite!), Colon (on anything and everything), Boyette, Sparling, and worse. On the writing side, the only man of note is (briefly) Archie Goodwin, and your mainstay is Fleisher, who must be the most Macabre Bastard in the history of comics! Even the company editorials are swipes, combining Marvel's detail-obsession and DC's vagueness.

There were, of course, too many titles to begin with; a far better idea would have been to start with a few Showcase-type titles, and

to have built on the sales returns, slowly but surely. I'm not going to say anything about their black & white magazines--I don't think anything need be said. They were obviously created to make a swift buck--which was, in my opinion, exactly why the entire Atlas/Seaboard range was created.

And with that kind of attitude you don't get anywhere, baby. -HT

THE LEGION OF MONSTERS #1 (September)

This first and only issue has recently come out from Gold Star, who are charging 25p now for the new black & whites, now that they all cost a dollar. This magazine was designed to continue the adventures of Marvel's monsters, now that the horror line has been cut back so drastically. It has an Adams cover, a tale of the Frankenstein Monster by Moench, Mayerik, Adkins, and Marcos, the introduction of "The Manphibian" by Wolfman, Isabella, Cockrum, and Grainger, chapter 7 (the first since March) of the Thomas/Giordano Dracula adaptation, and a short filler called "The Flies" scripted by Conway and drawn by Paul Kirschner and Ralph Reese. It's an interesting issue, but, with the decline of the horror market, doomed from the start. -Paul D! Gravett

CONAN #54 (October)

"A Shadow on the Land" by Roy Thomas, John Buscema, and Tom Palmer

Now that 99% of all known Marvel comics are unreadable, Conan seems even better than it used to be. It may be the same old mixture of gods, temples, city-states, mercenaries, court fops, and heroics, but it's a hell of a lot more impressive than anybody else's mixture of gods, temples, city-states, mercenaries, court fops, and heroics.

I needn't tell you the plot--you must know it backwards and inside-out by now. -Chris Ash

"CHOICE" COMICS

a report by ace newshound Chris Ash

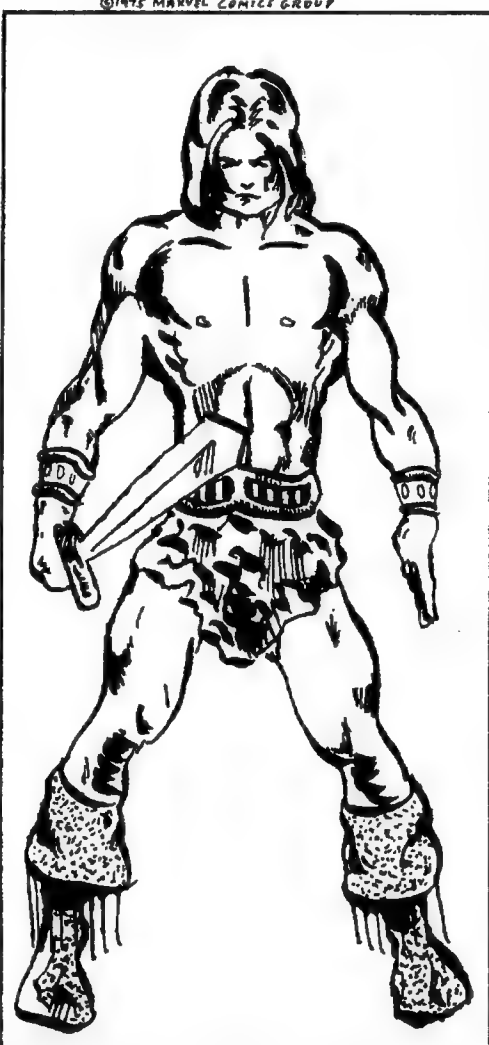
The Kinsman Morrison Gallery, Maddox Street, London, recently held a comics exhibition, based on the EC line and also including some original artwork from more recent British and American sources. As far as the EC comics were concerned, it was all a little redundant--they were all unreadably encased in plastic bags. However, a few were opened and framed, and I was particularly impressed by the brightness and fastness of the colours in the original "Mad" comics. On the subject of Kurtzman, the exhibition handout tells us that John Cleese was involved in "Help", a humour magazine he edited after he left Bill Gaines...and at the same time, so was Terry Gilliam.

The original art included stuff by Kirby, Smith, Sinnott, Colan and Ditko -- all highly priced, of course. When I was there, the other visitors seemed to be lunchtime office workers, none of whom were adopting derogatory attitudes -- one girl was actually standing reading two consecutive pages of a framed "Weird Science" tale with no hope of perusing the rest of the story. It was all a long way from the I.C.A... well, a couple of miles. -CA

DOC SAVAGE 2 (Oct)

Doc thundered his way through a total of 181 adventures, written by "Kenneth Robeson", back in the thirties and forties -- now his exploits are being brought to us by Doug Moench, and he's doing a fine job of capturing the spirit of the Man of Bronze, and his fabulous five; number this as Doc Savage novel #183.

What can one say? There's a powerful Ken Barr cover, an interview with Ron Ely--and a 55-page epic of Doc, a girl in distress, U-238, spanish treasure--and a cavern under the arctic sea, populated by reptile-men, its walls aglow with radiation... It all adds up to a comic not to be missed. -Ruan Lanihorne



CLAW THE UNCONQUERED #4 (December)

"The Coming of N'Hglthss" by Michelinie, Chua, and Boyette

Mercifully, Pat Boyette will not be ruining many more issues of this title with his inks, and, if you can ignore them, Claw is really quite a good magazine, carefully keeping clear of too many similarities with Conan, the first and still the best sword and sorcery hero in comix, as Marvel proudly boast.

This issue introduces a new companion for Claw called Ghilkyn, who will be leading our hero on an unusual quest in coming issues. -PDG

MASTER OF KUNG FU #35 (December)

"Death-Hand and the Sun of Mordillo" by Doug Moench, Paul Gulacy, & Dan Adkins

The conclusion of a 3-part story, involving one of the weirdest villains I have seen in a comic for a long time. Many people object to Gulacy's style, particularly his Jim Steranko impersonations, but I find it quite impressive --especially on the kind of stories Shang is involved in at the moment.

And the good news is that, with the January issue, this title will be coming over to this country regularly. -Paul D! Gravett

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #7 (October)

The Creeper in "Menace of the Human Firefly" by Fleisher, Ditko, & Royer

When I think of all the decent DC characters who deserve better treatment than they get, this book rather annoys me. Maybe somebody is humouring Steve Ditko; if so, let me say that his contribution to this rather routine comic is the only reason for acquiring it. Royer is, fortunately, one of the few people who can ink Ditko reasonably faithfully.

But, surely, nobody involved in this book seriously believes that the Creeper has got a commercial future-- do they? -Chris Ash

WEIRD MYSTERY TALES #24 (November)

"Death is a Wind-Up Bear" by Mike Fleisher & Ricardo Villamonte (10pp), plus (8pp) "The Strange Ones" by Jack Oleck & Mike Kaluta

With the current cut-back in the horror and mystery field, this magazine bites the dust. Even so, this final issue is an above-average item, with a reasonable Draut cover, a chiller about man-eating teddies drawn very moodily by Villamonte, and eight pages of Kaluta art on a quite impressive Oleck SF story. However, this title is no great loss--the other mystery DC books are carrying on regardless. -PDG

HERCULES UNBOUND #1 (November)
by Conway, Garcia Lopez, and Wood

Yea, verily, and wouldst that Conway couldst hath been more original in choicetn of hero. Oh, the hecketh with this! Aside from that, we have a nice origin issue, not brilliant but it sets the stage and introduces the characters. There's potential knocking around in these 4-colour pages, but will it be used?

Right, I'll take the chance of making a fool of myself by stating that I don't think it'll last more than 6 issues. Now, we'll see! -NPE



CREEPY #74 (October)

This issue reprints 9 stories drawn by Reed Crandall, with one in colour. Even the cover is reprint, and there's no letter page, or a Wrightson intro. Still, it's a good issue, as long as you haven't seen too many of the tales before. Next issue promises to be a lot better with all new stories by Toth, Ortiz, Severin, Adams, and Wood.

-Paul D! Gravett

ADVENTURES ON THE PLANET OF THE APES 2 (Nov)
"World of Captive Humans" by Doug Moench,
George Tuska, and Mike Esposito

When I reviewed the b&w version of this tale in Bem-3, I didn't like it much; seeing it in colour hasn't changed things. The most memorable item in this hash is that the credits are omitted -- a merciful move towards the writer and artists.

-Nigel Edwards

Reprints of CM 17, 20 & 21. Something worth seeing again, with some of the best Kane art ever, terrific angled shots only he can do. FAN-tastic! Now, I guess, who's my favourite artist? What a mean, Ross Andru? -NPE

GIANT-SIZE CAPTAIN MARVEL #1 (1975)

((I knew editing Nameless Zine #3 like an Ace Double would have a bad effect on Nige...-ML))

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #8 (November)
The Warlord in "Land of Fear" by Grell

Written and drawn by Mike Grell, this series gets off to a fine start. It has a vaguely ERB atmosphere, with a savagely exotic land found inside the Earth, and Warlord, a USAF pilot, looks a bit like a white-haired Green Arrow.

It's interesting to note, though, that this was originally a strip called "Savage Empire" which "Iron Mike" revamped into the comic-book format. DC (especially editor Joe Orlando) are pretty sure of this feature, as Warlord is to get his own mag straight away, the first issue to be cover-dated February '76.

-PDG

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA 120-2 (July-Sept)
by Cary Bates and Marty Pasko, plus Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin

The new three-in-one review that cleans as well as it shines; I think I'd better turn the television off. The artwork, by Dillin is... good...but it seems that, at DC, the current artists are told to copy the style of previous artists (Novick after Adams on Batman and after Infantino on Flash, Redondo after Wrightson on Swamp Thing). Thank ENB that they haven't made Dillin copy Sekowsky!

The story doesn't do justice to its guest-star Adam Strange, with its bringing back of some of his old menaces without an editorial note to say in which M.I.S. they first appeared in, something Julius wouldn't have done back in the sixties. What do we get then? 2 issues of rehased plots (something Cary Bates is very good at--he gets enough practise in the Flash). That little comment brings us rather mundanely to #122, "The Great Identity Crisis", and new writer Martin Pasko, who should have stuck to the lettercols. Dr Light returns in an inane tale that should have stayed untold. Oh yeah, the artwork is...er...um... -Richard Ashford

PHOENIX #3 (June)

"The Day of the Devil" by Gabe Levy and Sal Amendola (11pp), plus The Dark Avenger in "The Rat Pack" by John Albano, Pat Broderick, and Terry Austin (8pp)

Good ol' T&P have managed to get a few new issues over, despite the upcoming stoppage. This issue has, behind a Thorne cover, eleven pages of Phoenix, drawn rather indistinctly at times by Amendola, plus in the back eight of scrumptious Broderick/Austin art introducing the Dark Avenger--a really enjoyable filler.

Next issue, Estrada moves in and ruins the Phoenix series completely -- and there's very little chance of it rising from the ashes. Ah well, it was nice while it lasted.

-PDG

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Sorry, but Bem-2 is sold out! And, as DC would say, supplies are dangerously low on Bem-4. Be the envy (huh?) of every fan on your block, buy them all while you can for artwork by Greg Chown, Paul Rose, and Superswipe, and written contributions by Ruey Lanihorne, Ed Sallis, Nige Edwards, Jonn Hay, Dave Weedon, Reg Uspatoff (who him?), Jack Straw, Gary Fox, Pete April, and anyone else who works cheap...

FROM: Martin Lock.

and why not SUBSCRIBE at the same time, if you can't get Bem locally; thanks to our friendly post office, the rate is now 70p for 5 issues. As always, all current Bem subscribers are unaffected by this increase--there will be no more to pay.

AND NOW, BACK TO FAN-THINGS...

is showcased--it's fun, with a hero rather like our assistant editor entangled in a "Little Nemo in SF" situation. Next, Warren Tufts, American Western artist, has Ervin Rustemagić interview him, which leads into the reprint of the first part of his fine-looking "Lance" tale; after an appreciation of Chilean Arturo del Castillo comes a full 15-page story of his western hero, "Ringo" -- some of the best western art I've seen, combined with an engrossing story. Add an excellent back cover by Victor de la Fuente and Winsor McCay-cum-Jeff Jones front cover by Gigi, and you've got a strong reminder that there's more to comics than American comic books!

Back to the home-grown product; COMIXINE vol.2 no.1 (previous two issues were called EON), edited by Marc Baines from 12 Leadhall Crescent, Harrogate HG2 9NG, and costing 15p by post, is out now, and I'm happy to report Marc's made the grade! Eon #1 was--

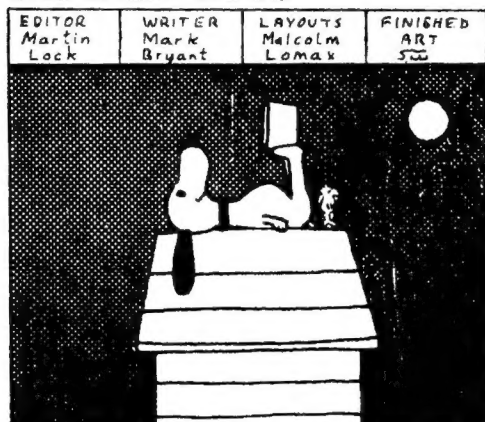
well--a first issue; #2 was an improvement, especially art-wise; and now this one is well worth getting! Artists include Chown (there's a two-page strip of his here, with Captain Comix himself) and Superswipe, plus a nicely-done page by Gary Selemba; writers of articles are Marc (on Ka-Zar), Charles Shaar Murray (on Cap America, reprinted by Marc from the NME with permission), and our own Martin Lock (on Green Lantern), and we get all the features a zine should have. A clever blend of stencil and litho printing --yes, if Marc can get his 'O' levels out of the way and bring Comixine out every 3 months, we're onto something good!

In the not-least position, a few words about OBLIVION #1 (Aug) -- unpretentious, amusing, entertaining, Fanhunter File by me, individual...20p from Chris R. Wiggin.

I may not be in town for Bem-8, so you'd better be prepared for Nige & Co to handle Fan-Things. However, I shall return!

by B.L. Schwipe

CAPTAIN NUTS



SCORPIO #1 (A Quasar Visual Paperback, 52 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x6 $\frac{3}{4}$ " pages for 15p; colour cover) "Sounds of Silence", drawn by Trevor Goreing (sic) & Garry Leach, 31pp.

What a cartload of unsophisticated, overpriced, badly written, and only passably drawn fertiliser! (I've got the strangest feeling I've just been edited...) "A Quasar Visual Paperback", indeed, with tiny pages and a plot to match, with dull clichés, leaden prose, bland unthinking violence, dull mechanical sex, and a topless girl's photo on the cover. No wonder fandom's own Richard Burton alleges it was t'other chap (the film actor?). credited as "production manager"; a back-up kung fu strip isn't too bad, but if I'd paid money for this, especially 15p, I'd have been ripped off!

-Jon Hay

HULK #194 (December)

"The Day of the Locust" by Len Wein, Sal Buscema, and Joe Staton

In a mind-rotting attempt to destroy the Bem reviewer, deadlines & no-ideas combine to render him helpless! "UHH, EDWOODS ONLY WANT TO REVIEW COMIC!" The dastardly duo leave him defeated, but suddenly "KEEP AWAY, EDWOODS NO LIKE DUMB READERS!" "It's okay, Edwards, we'll help you. Have a pint!" The Bemused Bard crashes out of the pub, and heads home. "NOW EDWOODS TAKE CARE OF THAT UNFINISHED REVIEW!"

"In a strange way, I think he knows that we're his friends."

-Nige Edwards

SPACE: 1999 #1 (November)

25c: "Moonless Night" (22pp) by Cuti & Staton, including "Intelligent Species" £1.00 b&w: "The Last Moonrise" (5pp) by Cuti & Morrow; "Seeds of Doubt" (15pp) written by Gill; "Cornucopia" (10pp) and "Endgame" (20pp) written by Cuti.

So, Charlton go into the TV-adaptation game, with two first issues based on SPACE: 1999. The colour comic is by the E-Man team of Cuti & Staton, with a Staton cover that captures Martin Landau and Barbara Bain nicely; after a hurried five pages telling how the moon got hurled out of orbit, the rest of the 22 pages are devoted to a not-bad tale of the exploration of an unknown planet. The art (and script) isn't in the same inspired class as E-Man was, as the TV format is restricting -- but it's a good SF comic. The black & white magazine sports a cover (and two interior tales) by Morrow, plus two by a less illustrious artist -- he tries, complete with letratone, but Koenig and Bergman aren't always recognisable.

It seems that Charlton already publish a line of general-interest magazines, on pop music, puzzles, country & western, karate, wild west, and films/TV, so their new group of black & white TV-based comics should be assured of a fair distribution.

But two comics of the same title, both starting with (roughly) the same story of the moon leaving Earth-orbit, and starting in the same month... That's just a little bit unusual, I think.

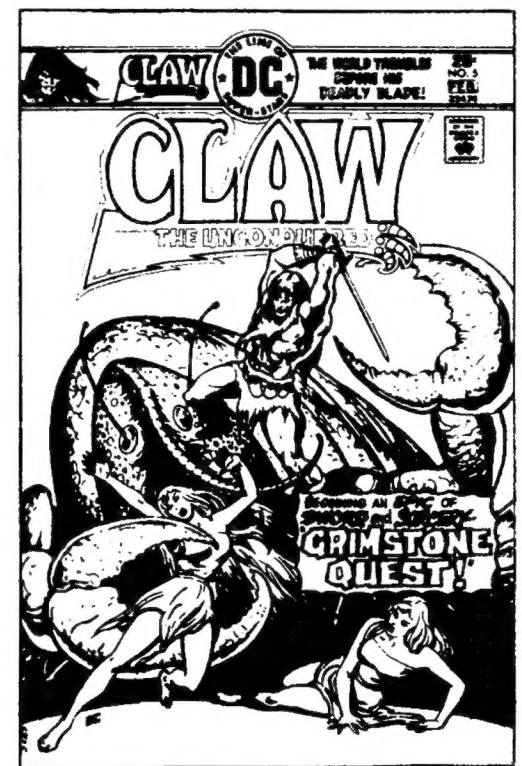
-Ruan Lanihorne



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